



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

**Department of Planning and Development**

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3010089

**Applicant Name:** Layne Cubell for the Seattle Center

**Address of Proposal:** 305 Harrison Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow grading of 3,439 cubic yards of material for site improvements and landscaping. Project also includes 3,763 square feet of new entrance canopies (Intiman & Repertory Theaters).

The following approval is required:

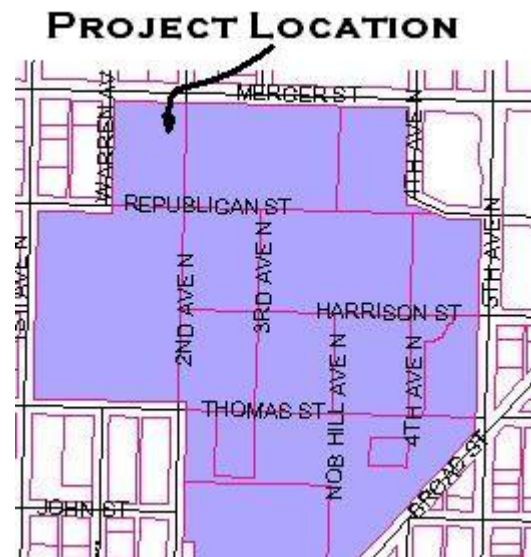
**SEPA - Environmental Determination** – (Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.)

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS  
☒ DNS with conditions  
☐ DNS involving non exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Site and Vicinity Description**

The subject property is located on Mercer Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) located between the Seattle Repertory Theater and the Intiman Theater on the northwest corner of the Seattle Center campus. The project is located within the Uptown Urban Center (UC). The project area totals 70,450 square feet of land zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 with an 85 foot height limit (NC3-85). The Seattle Center campus is also zoned NC3-85. Property across Mercer Street to the north are zoned NC3-40 and to the west across Warren Avenue are zoned NC3-40. The property is not a mapped Environmentally Critical Area (ECA).



The current project site contains 22 parking stalls (13 are ADA compliant) arranged along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) between the 2 theaters. The area adjacent to the Seattle Repertory Theater is elevated approximately 5 to 6 feet higher than 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) and slopes gently to the east from the theater down to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated). 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) is lined with street trees along the western edge. There is a small amount of landscaping along the east edge of the project site directly adjacent to the Intiman Theater.

### Proposal

The proposal is to improve the landscaping in what is referred to as the Theater Commons between the Seattle Repertory and Intiman Theaters. The project area comprises approximately 70,450 square feet, includes a vacated portion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated), and will regrade the site to provide terraced plazas and gardens and new theater canopies to provide weather protection at the Seattle Rep's main entrance (approximately 3,740 square feet) and a smaller canopy for the ADA compliant entrance at the rear of the Intiman Theater (approximately 25 square feet). Approximately 2,370 cubic yards of existing soils will be excavated and removed from the site. Approximately 1,070 cubic yards of clean soils will be imported to create a new bio-retention garden. New pavement, pervious pavers, concrete and crushed rock will be used to create a new tree-lined pedestrian oriented street with crushed gravel planting strips and sustainable gardens which will replace the existing 66-foot wide vacated street. The central roadbed will replace the existing asphalt with new concrete pavers. New hardscape plazas at the north and south end of the project site will also include permeable pavement.

A natural drainage feature will be used as a bio-retention drainage area collecting the rainwater from the Seattle Repertory Theater's roof and combined with the site's surface runoff to be re-used for irrigation. After the project's completion the impervious cover within the project site will be reduced from 50% to 48%. 37 of the 54 existing trees (larger than 6 inches diameter) will be removed or replaced either on-site or elsewhere on the campus at a 2:1 ratio. An additional 5 ornamental Magnolias will be relocated elsewhere on the campus as well. All the existing London Plane trees will be retained as will all the London Plane trees located at the project site's perimeter. Nineteen additional London Plane trees will be added to either side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated). Ornamental shade trees groundcover and vines will also be installed.

### Public Comments

Public notice of the project application was published on May 29, 2009. The required public comment period ended on June 17, 2009. DPD received no comment letters regarding this proposal.

### **ANALYSIS - SEPA**

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts of the proposed project was made in the environmental checklist dated June 1, 2009.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) states, in part, "*where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation*" subject to some limitations. Thus, the mitigation that may be required pursuant to SEPA authority is limited. A discussion of likely adverse impacts and how they may be appropriately mitigated follows below.

### Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected; decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from grading and clearing and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; temporary soil erosion; increased dust caused by drying mud tracked onto streets during construction activities; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise; increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

City codes and/or ordinances apply to the proposal and will provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: 1) Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way during construction, 2) Noise Control Ordinance; and 3) Stormwater, Drainage and Grading Code (temporary soil erosion). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation and further mitigation by imposing specific conditions is not necessary for these impacts.

### Traffic

The traffic generated by this proposal will be limited to construction vehicles and construction workers. Construction entrances are proposed off of Mercer Street and also shown at the south end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) and August Wilson Way. Construction traffic will access the site from Republican Street via August Wilson Way which is also an internal pedestrian corridor to the Seattle Center. The applicant has indicated the approved contractor will be required to staff the entrance to remove the manual bollards and escort the truck to the work site. The trucks will then exit the site onto Mercer Street. All staging is expected to be within the project's work limits. No staging of equipment is expected to be outside of the fenced work area. The work crew is expected to park close by either on the streets or within pay parking lots/garages. The construction traffic will be required to be coordinated with and approved by SDOT especially if it is necessary to block sidewalks or other public rights-of-way during the construction period. A condition has been provided at the end of this decision to address this short-term impact.

The existing 22 (13 ADA compliant and 9 regular) parking spaces of "Lot 6" are being eliminated. These parking spaces provided paid off-street parking for the general public and were restricted to accessing the parking lot from Mercer Street. Bollards at the south end prevented access to August Wilson Way and the rest of the Seattle Center campus. Seattle Center staff is provided access through the bollards when needed for maintenance or other activities. The central bollards are lowered to provide this access. There are similar bollards proposed at the northern end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) to permit similar activities by Seattle Center staff after construction. The 13 ADA compliant spaces are being added to the Mercer Street garage. It is expected that patrons will use the street level crosswalk to gain access across Mercer Street. There is a new elevator at the south end of the sky-bridge which will provide access from Mercer Street to the lower level of the Promenade in front of the Marion Oliver McHall Hall which will also provide access to both the Intiman Playhouse and the Seattle Repertory Theater. After construction it is anticipated that traffic along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) will be predominantly limited to Seattle Center staff. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) will become a pedestrian corridor between the two theaters.

### Air Quality

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with development come from multiple sources; the extraction, processing, transportation, construction and disposal of materials and landscape disturbance (Embodied Emissions); energy demands created by the development after it is completed (Energy Emissions); and transportation demands created by the development after it is completed (Transportation Emissions). Short term impacts generated from the embodied emissions results in increases in carbon dioxide and other green house gases thereby impacting air quality and contributing to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this specific project. The other types of emissions are considered under the use-related impacts discussed later in this document. No SEPA conditioning is necessary to mitigate air quality impacts pursuant to SEPA policy SMC 25.05.675A.

### Noise

The Noise Ordinance is found to be adequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhood from construction truck traffic and on-site construction activities. Additional mitigation is not warranted.

### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased light and glare.

Long-term impacts such as this are typical of this type of project and will be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these are the: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Codes; and the Land Use Code (lighting impacts).

Other impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes or conditions are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

### Light and Glare

The proposed project includes new nighttime lighting in the garden and plaza area. The existing street lights along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North (vacated) will be replaced. New uplighting will also be used for the new canopies along Mercer Street. The lighting will be on astronomical timers (adjusted seasonally). The theater lights will be turned off following evening events. Maximum output of the new lighting is expected to not exceed 5000 lumens.

To reduce lighting impacts and glare, the new lighting fixtures and bulbs will specified to minimize light and glare on the uphill residential neighbors. The garden and plaza areas will be downlit to keep lighting focused on-site. The replacement streetlights will match the Seattle Center's new improved standard which provides "visor" shielding, minimizing glare, be more optically precise and provide safer, even lighting along the pedestrian corridor. The city's land use code adequately addresses this environmental impact. No further conditioning is warranted.

## **DECISION - SEPA**

The responsible official on behalf of the lead agency made this decision after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).
- [ ] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

## **CONDITIONS - SEPA**

### *Prior to the Issuance of Construction Permit*

1. Prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for DPD and SDOT review and SDOT approval. The Draft CTMP shall be required to be submitted to the DPD Land Use Reviewer (Craig Flamme, 206.233.7223) for review and comment while coordinating with the SDOT reviewer. The **approved CTMP** must be provided to the zoning reviewer prior to the construction plan's zoning approval. Components of the plan must include at a minimum: construction traffic ingress/egress points, employee parking location and alternative methods and incentives for arriving/leaving work (transit, car or van pool, etc), truck queuing within applicable rights-of-way (if necessary), construction materials delivery ingress/egress, pedestrian circulation, and time limitations during construction. Other CTMP components may be added as relevant and/or required by SDOT.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: August 6, 2009  
Craig Flamme, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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